

EDUCATION ADVOCACY PROGRAM

Introduction

The state Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) Children's Administration launched a ground-breaking Education Advocacy Program in collaboration with Treehouse, a King County non-profit organization leading the way in providing educational advocacy training and support for youth in foster care. Through this statewide initiative, Education Advocacy Coordinators will be located in the regions to provide a broad range of education advocacy. Each region will have one full time coordinator or two part time coordinators depending on their geography. The Education Advocacy Program is scheduled to begin in February 2006.

Questions and Answers

What is the role of the Education Advocacy Coordinators?

Education Advocacy Coordinators intervene on behalf of youth who are faced with challenging obstacles to being successful in school. Coordinators will train social workers, caregivers, and community partners on specific topics such as special education, federal and state education legislation, and school discipline, as well as guide students in becoming better self advocates.

What types of educational advocacy interventions will be offered?

Direct Advocacy- for educational cases requiring more intensive advocacy, the Coordinator will directly intervene to resolve the situation. *Examples include: school enrollment or placement crisis, school discipline issues, accessing services such as Special Education*

Consultation- providing the caregivers, youth, or social workers with the advocacy steps, strategies, and tools to address the situation themselves with support from the Coordinator. *Examples include school communication conflicts, accessing services such as 504 plans, attendance issues*

Information and Referral- when a situation can be resolved by providing educational information, local resources, or referrals to the appropriate agency or service. The Coordinator(s) in each region will have access to necessary information to assist youth. *Examples include resources on alternative education programs, community tutoring services, and special education laws*

Who is eligible for the program?

Any child or youth who is placed in out-of-home care, with a priority given to those in grades kindergarten - 10th is eligible for the program.

CA Social workers should be contacted when an educational concern is identified by the child/youth, their caregivers, or other individuals.

Who can make a referral for education advocacy?

All referrals need to be initiated by the child or youth's CA social worker.

How is a referral made?

Referrals are made electronically by CA social workers and e-mailed to the Treehouse Educational Advocacy Program Manager. This centralized referral process allows the Program Manager to screen referrals for eligibility and ensure that all necessary information is included. The Program Manager will then determine which EA Coordinator is most appropriate to deliver services; this includes geographic considerations as well as caseload size and existing relationships with schools and districts.

A student's social worker should be contacted when educational concerns are identified.

For more information on the implementation of the Education Advocacy Program please email the CA Education Program Manager at [DSHS CA Outcomes@dshs.wa.gov](mailto:DSHS_CAOutcomes@dshs.wa.gov).